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OPEN LETTERS.

That "probably carnivorous" *Polyporus*.

I am much obliged to Mr. Cook for his helpful criticism in the March GAZETTE of my note in the November number. The points that he makes strike me as generally well taken and it was because of my recognition of their force that I entitled my note a "*probable* new category of carnivorous plants." I intended to make plain to all readers that my interpretation of the facts was a purely tentative one. I am not yet sure, however, that *Polyporus applanatus* does not digest the unfortunate flies. I distinctly stated that the production of new pores was *not* while the fly was in "high relief" upon the surface, but after the fly was *thoroughly digested*. In this case the "surface area" was not larger than before though the pores were more numerous and somewhat smaller than upon a similar area where no fly had been captured. Thus Mr. Cook's objection, and his principal objection, seems to be scarcely to the point. To be sure I speak of the flies "raising the hymenial level," but since this is a tabular not a rounded excrescence there is really no increase in poriferous surface. The statement was, however, not sufficiently clear and I readily see how it led Mr. Cook astray. I take pleasure in amending it. And again, it occurs to me that the illustration given by Mr. Cook of the way in which the *Polyporus* hymenophores "grow around" small twigs, etc., is hardly applicable to this case. It is not the general growth that encloses the fly but a renewed putting forth of hyphæ from the interior of the pores, apparently under the stimulation of the fly's presence. This struck me at the time and still appears to me to be noteworthy.

The little flies that I examined really did "lie flat upon the surface of the hymenophore." Perhaps this was due to prolonged tetanic contractions of the interesting muscles in their legs. But I leave that to Mr. Cook.—CONWAY MACMILLAN, *University of Minnesota*.

NOTES AND NEWS.

MR. J. G. BAKER is publishing in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* a synopsis of the species of *Canna*.

MR. A. A. HELLER has published a preliminary list of the lichens of Lancaster county, Penn.

A SPECIMEN of *Cereus senilis* ("old man cactus") which has been in cultivation in England for about sixty years has grown only about three inches in all that period.

THE PROTECTION of plants against snails has been studied by L. Piccioli, who finds that such substances as tannic acid, latex, essential oils, raphides, etc., furnish the chief protection.

DURING THE coming season Mr. Charles W. Armstrong, of Toronto, intends to go thoroughly into the flora of York county, Canada. He will collect sets of plants for specialists in any group above bryophytes.